23| bother to raise them; as a result the number of horses has decreased, and this country, formerly renowned for its mounts, may have none in a not too distant future.

Unfortunately, horses do not thrive in every part of the country; Ouagadougou is particularly deadly for them, although, to my knowledge, the true reason for this insalubrity has not yet been found. The natives attribute it to the water, and there is no doubt that horses watered at the wells are in better health than those watered at the streams; it is also true that horses thrive in areas only a few kilometers [134] from Ouagadougou. Europeans tend to attribute this mortality to the tsetse fly. The two opinions are easy to reconcile, for, on the one hand, tsetse flies prefer damp places, and, on the other hand, the [312] Ouagadougou wells contain salt of magnesium which purges the horses and thus checks the disease.

23| The Peul own fine herds of bovines, some rather small and without 563 humps (small cattle), others large and humped (zebu). Traders also 437 use the zebu as a beast of burden. Much of this cattle belongs to the Mossi who seldom tend their own herds but prefer to entrust them to the Peul shepherds who keep the milk in payment. An adult cow yields from two to four liters a day during the good season. The guardians, however, know how to make the best of this near slavery. When an animal dies it is never one of theirs, and if the owner of the herd /a Mossi/ dies without telling his heirs where his cattle is to be found and how many head he owns, the Peul carefully refrain from disclosing the herd entrusted to them. In former days they were slightly more conscientious because they feared retaliation, but now they bless the French occupation.

23| The herds are sometimes decimated by an epizootic disease, as happened in 1910 and 1911 when the Koupéla area was ravaged by what must have been the bovine plague or peripneumonia. The cows would cough, entirely lose their appetites, and die within a few days.

The Mossi also raise bees. The hives are made of straw or flexible sticks and placed in the trees; sometimes swarms of bees also settle in the hollow trunks of baobabs. The honey is gathered at the end and at the beginning of the winter season; the hive is smoked out and [273] the bees destroyed. Honey is used primarily to make bèsé, a kind of hydromel which the Moslem Yarsé, Peul, and Haoussa like very much, and which they are allowed to drink in spite of its fermentation; [237] whereas, in principle, millet beer is forbidden to them. The wax 306 is sold to the jewelry-makers who use it to make bracelets by the lost wax process.

592 A typical soukala consists of the master's hut, a hut for each wife, one hut for the sheep and goats, another for the horse if he has one, a hut for the family mill, and, finally, a receiving hut with two doors sufficiently high to permit entrance without stooping and set sometimes as an entrance way and sometimes within the cluster of huts. All these dwellings stand in a circle and are joined either by a cob wall or by /11/ mat fences taller than a man and held up by stakes. The master's hut, which usually stands beside the huts for the horses and sheep, is set off from the others by mats to insure his privacy. A low wall describes an arc within the inner courtyard; this is the kitchen when it is not raining. Big jars of fired clay which are used to brew millet beer rest between the huts. In front of this cluster of huts, a shelter is built, usually high enough to permit standing and consisting basically of forked stakes with branches and séko resting upon them; this shelter serves as a refuge during the hot part of the day. Small boys and unmarried girls live with their mother, while older boys, servants, and slaves each have their separate huts which face the dwellings of the master and his wives.

The term yri or soukala covers this whole complex of structures. Each soukala is a distinct unit, and, some time after they marry, the children build their own residence, set completely apart from that of their parents, often in another part of the village and sometimes in another village altogether. The soukala stand fifteen to twenty meters apart, and, because of this, the villages, though adequately concentrated, cover a rather extensive area. The heads of cantons place an ostrich egg at the peak of the roof on their own dwellings, and some even build terraced huts higher than the surrounding dwellings. They keep their riches in these huts and a prison in the basement. An earthen stairway leads to the terrace where the master of the house receives his guests when the sun begins to sink on the horizon.

These people, apparently so peaceful today, were formerly quite warlike and went off to war at the slightest pretext. Foreign to the land they now occupy, the Mossi must have conquered it by force of arms. The Tarik-es-Soudan /History of Sudan/ relates that the people of Yatenga seized Timbuktu in the fourteenth century, and in the fifteenth they probably carried their incursions as far as Lake Bébo and even Oualata. (4) The Mossi army was greatly feared.

4. Delafosse, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 80.

794 sunrise and at sunset, during the first week of the winter season, then, later, only every six days, in the morning at sunrise. They go to the [778] altars, formed by three conical stones, to offer sacrifices and libations, always surrounded by all the people, the heads of families, tom-tom players, and family masks (Ouango).

"During the entire year, in a highly decorated niche dug into a [372] wall of their houses, the priests watch the sacred fire with which, at the end of the rainy season, they must light the great purifying brush fires."

Lieutenant Desplagnes adds in a note:

"They make sacrifices at each new moon, and then have seven great feasts each year for the divinity. Finally, during the sun festivals, [237] they use a cow's tail to tie the sun to the earth and assure its fertilizing warmth." /31/

794 In my book Noir du Soudan, Pays Mossi et Gourounsi /Blacks of 171 the Sudan, Country of the Mossi and Gourounsi/ (1912), I reproduced this page of Lieutenant Desplagnes without comment (page 590). In addition, I described the cult of the sun among the Gourounsi, who, like the Mossi, are part of the Voltaic family. Thus, on page 241, I wrote:

"The Kassonfra, like the Nounouma and the Menkiéra, say that they offer no sacrifice either to the moon or to the sun. However, I found an exception in the village of Nitiédougou (canton of Sia). It would seem that here, in the early mornings when the sun rises and begins to leave the horizon, people offer it a chicken or whatever else they wish to offer. Moreover, this sacrifice is only made when the voro (1) says it should be made.

1. Soothsayer.

"My informant claims that this same procedure is followed, not only in Nitiédougou and in the little canton of Sia, but also in all of the Kasouna (Kassonfra and Kassonboura) country. He must be mistaken (2) since my previous informants and my interpreter, who is

2. Today, on the other hand, I tend to think he was right.

Kassonboura, have neither seen nor heard of anything like it."

231 We mentioned earlier the karyanga, which is gathered wild or cultivated for horses. It is given to them at the height of the winter season.

Many Mossi own dogs. They use them to guard the soukala, to hunt in the bush, or for consumption. In the latter case, the [262 438] animal is fattened. Dog meat was sold on Mossi markets in the old days, but the Yarsé, who are Moslems as we know, found it improper to exhibit dog meat alongside mutton or beef, and the custom was abandoned. Dogs are still killed inside the soukala, however, for consumption purposes.

[435] A dog is worth from 2 to 5 francs.

The Mossi have chickens and guinea fowl. The chickens are 235 worth 250 cowries. The eggs are not sold.

It is the men who care for the chickens. They /492/ look in the bush for termite nests which they break to pieces so that the chickens may eat the termites. Sometimes, instead of one ration only, the chickens are issued two a day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

The guinea fowl are less numerous than the chickens. Accord- [435 462] ing to their weight, they are worth from 250 to 300 cowries. Their eggs are eaten. It is the men who care for the guinea fowl as for the chickens.

231 The Mossi place beehives in the trees. The hives consist of elongated straw cylinders shaped like a tom-tom. One of the sides is completely closed, while the other is perforated to allow the bees to come and go.

231 These hives are placed in the trees at the time when the warm ●←237 season begins (March), and then the honey is gathered every month except at the height of the rainy season, when the downpours are too heavy. The children are in charge of this. They climb the tree with a straw torch on fire, and frighten the bees away. Then they take the honey and come down. In order to separate the honey from the wax, the honeycombs are placed in a large canari full of water. Another canari is heated intensely, and its burning-hot base is brought close to the surface of the jar where the combs are floating. The wax melts and sinks to the bottom, while the honey floats. The wax is sold to jewelers, who use it in the [306] manufacture of copper objects made by the lost-wax process. It is

also sold to shoemakers, who need it to rub and soften their hides. In former days wax was given rather than sold. Nowadays it is sold because of the need for cash occasioned by the tax. As for honey, it is eaten pure, or with milk, or mixed with sarabout. It is also made into a drink called bésou, béci, or bici, which is no other than hydromel. The latter is known, incidentally, throughout West Africa.

The Nounouma call it torosana, from sana, "drink" and toro, "honey." The Kassouna call it by the same name.

The women make hydromel as follows. They boil water, pour the honey into it, and stir. Then they add small-millet flour. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood and then strained to rid the drink of /493/ all impurities. It is poured into a clean canari, which is carefully covered. At the end of two days, one has a yellowish drink which is worth 400 cowries or 0.40 franc a liter at Ouagadougou. Among the Nounouma, where honey is more abundant than among the Mossi, the liter is worth 0.20 franc (at Leo, for example). Hydromel is stronger and more potent than dolo, and one must be careful not to drink too much.

The Mossi also make little cakes with honey and millet flour. They call them baradaré. These cakes are not made by the Gourounsi.

This concludes our review of Mossi stockbreeding. Generally speaking, as we have seen, it is quite mediocre with the exception of two specialities, donkeys and horses. As far as donkeys are concerned, although the Mossi are no traders and have only begun to do a little trading since we occupied their territory, they have always liked the animals and used them either for their own transport or to carry grain. They have an average of one donkey per 42 inhabitants, while the Dagari only have one per 1,000, the Nounouma one per 166, the Sissala one per 55, the Kassonboura one per 50. In this respect, the Mossi run second only to the traders, the Yarsé, who have a pressing need for donkeys in connection with their trade and who have one per 23 inhabitants.

As for horse raising, the Mossi have left it to the Foulbé of Mossi territory. The Mossi nevertheless have an average of one horse per 166 inhabitants among the common people, and one per